How to Start your Own
4-H Outdoor Skills/Shooting Sports Club

A Leader's Idea Starter and Planning Guide

The what, why, who and how of a
4-H Outdoor Skills/Shooting Sports club.

What is a 4-H Outdoor Skills/Shooting Sports Club?

A 4-H Outdoor Skills/Shooting Sports Club is made up of four or more young people and two or more trained adults who usually get together at least six times for each shooting discipline during the 4-H year. Because of the nature of this activity, North Dakota’s rules are youth must be 8 years old before they will be allowed to shoot in any of the disciplines.

How do you start a 4-H Outdoor Skills/Shooting Sports Club?

- Find one or more adults (at least one instructor per discipline) who will attend the statewide leader training workshop.
- Find other adults who will be trained by the state-certified instructors and serve as assistant instructors in the designated shooting disciplines.
- Find boys and girls interest in shooting.
- Enroll the club with the Extension office.
- Meet with the club and plan a one-year program.
- Have fun together.

When will a project club meet?

Clubs may meet whenever it is convenient for everyone and wherever there is a safe shooting range available. Often meetings are held at established ranges in armories, in ranges which the group sets up in fair buildings, or at adapted outdoor ranges set up by the club. Meetings may consist of an hour of shooting and a short program. Some clubs meet throughout the year, while others combine several experiences in a one to two-month period. This will depend on the instructors time commitment.

What do 4-H’ers do at club meetings?

- Practice safety techniques and response to range commands
- Learn basic shooting fundamentals
- Clean and maintain firearms
- Learn about eye and ear protection
- Take field trips
- Develop shooting skills
- Explore wildlife conservation

Who leads the club?

A 4-H Outdoor Skills/Shooting club leader may be a parent or other adult in the community who is interested in working with the NDSU Extension Service 4-H Outdoor Skills/Shooting Sports Program and with young people on basic shooting skills. Interested adults don't have
to be expert marksmen to become involved in the program. An average shooter who cares about kids is a better instructor than an expert shooter who isn't interested in seeing youngsters develop.

The main requirement is willingness to spend a weekend learning techniques necessary to teach youngsters the basic fundamentals of shooting. (This training is different from the content of the North Dakota Hunter Safety Instructor course or NRA program.) Statewide leader training workshops are conducted a couple of times a year. Leaders certified at these workshops are authorized to train assistant instructors in the county.

**What special 4-H Activities are available?**

The five shooting disciplines are:

- Pistol
- Archery
- Muzzle Loading
- Rifle
- Shotgun

Other programs may include:

- Re-loading
- Wild Game Cookery
- Taxidermy
- Hunter Ethics
- Outdoor Clothing Tips
- Game and Gun Laws
- Gun smithing and many more
- Giving demonstrations
- Participating in competitive matches
- Outdoor Skills Camp

**What is the cost?**

The NDSU Extension Service 4-H Youth Program has no membership dues. However, local clubs may have dues and the cost of all supplies may be the responsibility of the members.

**Can parents be involved?**

Yes! 4-H is a family program. Parents often come to the meetings and act as range safety officers or assistant instructors. One or more may serve as club leaders.

**What support is provided?**

Leader training materials are available only through participation in the statewide leader training workshop. There are no 4-H member materials in this project.